An Expedient for Peace amongst Christians.

The SECOND PART.

GROUNDED

On the Impossibility of their Agreement in

Matters of Religion.

And further Enlarged in a

DISCOURSE OF Church and State.

WHEREIN

A *New Ecclesiastical Administration* is Exhibited

Behold I will bring it Health and Cure, and I will Cure them, and I will Reveal *unto them the abundance of* PEACE *and* TRUTH. *And I will cause the Captivity of* Judah, *and the Captivity of* Israel *to return, and I will build them as at the first.* Jer. 33. v. 6. 7.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by *George Larkin* at the *Two Swans* without *Bishopsgate*, and *R. Janeway* in *Queens-Head-Alley* in *Paternoster-Row.* 1689.

EPISTOLA DEDICATORIA.

Tempus refrigerationis è conspectu Domini dequo Locutus est Deus per os omnium Sanctorum Prophetarum adventum est. Judæis ergò Gentilibusque; cunctis *Pacis & Justitiæ* Cultoribus, Nec non omnibus Hujus mundi fælicem Statum, Gloriam Dei, aut Regnum Christi, ex corde cupientibus, Author hoc opusculum primariò Dedicat, horum omnium cupientissimus. Deindè Anglicanæ Conventioni Augustissimæ.

Cœtus Honorabilis! Naufragium Ecclesiæ accidisse, Partes laceratæ in mudani oceani faciem usquequaquè diffluentes satis demonstrant, & divinâ Providentiâ est penès vos reparare, & irrefragabilem reddere in æternum. Est igitur inquirendum quâ rupe, queis scopulis frangebatur. Tum ad istam partem, quæ ad vos (Patres Conscripti!) spectat, datâ veniâ, ego absolvam, *viz:* Sancire leges in Religione, non est sancire Religionem, sed perdere; est dare Veniam peccantibus, & Sectas & Divisiones creare, ut hodiè planè constat. De quibus tunc versabitur *Lex*? Dicam, *Leges* in favorem Societatum, Artium, mutuorum Fœderum, & Commercij ferendæ sunto. Religio est Dei Provincia Peculiaris, de illâ ad ferendas Leges

misit filium, & exhibuit Sacras Literas, & de his Legibus ipse *solus* est Judex & Veritas *sola* Regula, quam *Lex* creare nullo modo potest. Quid igitur vobis agendum est? Obsequendum Christi præcepto, qui Dixit *Ite & Docete*, &c. Ille hìc principio primas exhibuit lineas, & Primum Ecclesia Saxum posuit quod respuebant Ædificatores fatui, sed vos penès est anguli *Capitale* redere. Oh Gloria! Quæ laudes, qui honores Vestras circumstant sedes? Quàm honorabile erit in Secula Seculorum, inter omnes Gentes & Terrarum orbis incolas, *Pacis & Justitiæ* Fundatores, & Ecclesiæ tum Judæis tum Gentilibus Restauratores appellari? Pergite igitur sub Beatis Auspicijs Regis *Pacis* & *Veritatis* Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Vale.

T. C.

TO THE

READER.

I Will not Affront thee ſo much, as to ſuppoſe thee ignorant of the great Stir and Noiſe made in the World about Religion; For this would ſuppoſe thee to want thy Senſes: But if thou contributeſt to raiſe the Duſt, if thou art one of thoſe Bigots, *thoſe tenacious Animals, that will not part with their very Excrements, the cuttings of thy Hair, or the paring of thy Nails, for the* Publick Peace, *I charge thee to lay down my Book* (Excuſe my Courtſhip) *for I had rather thou wouldſt tear, than read it.*

'Tis to free and ingenuous Minds, diveſted of their Prejudices, who are willing to entertain Truth, *promote* Peace, *and as ready to receive, as to give their Reaſons, I ſay 'tis to ſuch, I addreſs the enſuing* Diſcourſe: *But alas! their Number is but few, and 'tis ſad and deplorable to obſerve, how fierce and zealous the moſt are in maintaining the Side and Party, which* Chance, *Education, Prejudice, Intereſt or Conſtitution has engaged them in. And the Generality of* Chriſtians *being ſo pre-ingaged and retained by their reſpective* Parties, *there's few can be prevailed upon to look into the State of the Whole; ſo that amongſt ſo many ſtrugling and contending* Parties, *the* Hiſtorians *Obſerva-*

tion

tion is made good; Dum singuli pugnant universi vincuntur; *Christianity is ruined, and must pay all their Reconings. And how sad and deplorable is the Victory, whose Triumph cannot be made, but by the Spoils of Christianity!* —Give thy Son the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession, *is the Prayer of many of us, and yet at the same time, we are ready to pull his Gospel up by the Roots, if we find it growing any where but in our own little Garden. We have taken an effectual Course to prevent our Prayers, and to put a Perfect Stop to its Propagations: For with what Face can we allure or invite any* Heathen *Nation, or any particular Man, to Espouse our Religion, when we have such Scenes of Misery and Distraction amongst us, when we can give no Security either to their Souls or Bodies, Amidst our fatal Contests, the one being liable to Destruction, the other to Damnation? But is there no* Balm in Gilead? *No Remedy for these things? I have (moved at so sad a Spectacle) amidst great Avocations, made one poor Essay: But,* Quis tam fœlici Sydere natus est, ut in his rebus arduis, in ipsissimam ubique veritatem, incidat primo Tentamine, *saith St.* Jerom; *What Man is so happy, amidst so great Difficulties, as to hit the Mark at the first Shot? And yet it has had no cold Entertainment, which has encouraged me to venture another Shaft. I here therefore present thee with a Second Part, begging no Favour or Approbation, having had it already, from a better hand, viz. from our* Saviour *himself; who has said* Beati Pacifici, *that the Peace-makers are Blessed. The Attempt is great for one single* Homuncio *to undertake; But the God of Peace and Truth needs neither Strength nor Number to bring his Designs to pass. And whatever the mad World may say, or the Issue be, it must be said of the* Author, *as of another Great Undertaker,* Magnis tamen excidit ausis.

AN

An Expedient for PEACE *amongst Christians, &c.*

THE SECOND PART.

CHRISTENDOM makes up a good part of the Habitable World, consisting of several Nations and Kingdoms, Professing but *One Religion*, and that the *best* in the World; but the Inhabitants have so mixt the Government of this Religion (which purely relates to *Another World*) with the Temporalities and Affairs of *This*, that they are become the Scorn and Derision of the more Intelligent parts of Mankind: For whereas they all believe in the Eternal and only True God, and in Jesus Christ his Ever Blessed Son; They have such bitter Contentions about *Forms*, and the *True way of Worship*, about right Interpretation of *Books*, about *Ceremonies*, *Vestments*, *Places*, *Times* and *Persons*, their *Power* and *Offices*, &c. That they make their most fruitful Land, an *Aceldama* or *Field of Blood*: Every little Sect, Way and Opinion, is called a *Religion*; and a *Law* is made to *Establish it*, and God Almighty entitl'd to the *Truth* of it; and when *He* is concerned, then their Opposition cannot be too much, but the Powers of the Earth must be Pulled down, their Dissenting Neighbours Destroyed; and themselves undone for the maintaining of it; so that

there is Kingdom againſt Kingdom, and Nation againſt Nation; There is Papiſts and Proteſtants, Calvinists, Lutherans; Diſſenters, Churchmen, and an endleſs number of new names of Diſtinction, the curſed motives to miſchief and Diſturbance, as is but too manifeſt at this Day. 'Tis of ſad Conſideration, that Chriſtian Princes muſt have no Allegiance paid them, if of a differing Opinion from their Subjects; That when a *Proteſtant* Rules, the Pope muſt diſcharge his Subjects from their Allegiance; and when a *Popiſh Prince* Reigns, his Proteſtant Subjects diſcharge themſelves —— It highly concerns them therefore to think of ſome Remedy and Expedient; for all their Power, their Titles and Crowns, are become Precarious things, and ever and anon ſubject to be laid aſide by the Inſolent Power of the Church, and ill Adminiſtration of the Affairs of another World: But time will be ill ſpent in Muſtering up a black liſt of Grievances, when they are ſo Notorious, and ſo much (I will not ſay ſeen but,) felt by all Sides and Parties of Chriſtians of what Quality ſoever, even from the King on his Throne, to the Beggar on the Dunghill; it will be much better ſpent in Contriving of Expedients. And it may juſtly be expected, that any performance of this nature, will rather meet with a favourable acceptance then diſcouragement, ſince a thing ſo univerſally wanted by all ſorts of Men.

The *Dove* has been *once ſent out*, but has *return'd again*, finding no place to reſt the Sole of her Foot; The Waters of Confuſion covering the Land: I ſhall preſume to ſend her *once more*, hoping ſhe will find them aſſwaged, and return with an Olive Leaf.

Then gently laying *Infallibility* aſide, I ſhall reſume my former Argument of Impoſſibility of Agreement, and put it in its place, not only as the more certain and undoubted Truth, but becauſe when a foundation for Peace is laid, it may be expected, it ſhould be a Propoſition univerſally acknow-

acknowledged and agreed to by all; And this we all know and agree in, *That we can Not Agree:* To this the whole Christian World may safely Subscribe; but if they will not, they cannot convince me to the contrary by any other thing than their Agreement. Let them Agree then, and I have done. But I shall take it for granted, they will not convince me after such a manner, and therefore will go on and say, That this Proposition must be one of the chief Stones of the Foundation we must Build our Peace upon; we must have our Agreement *one* way, from the Impossibility of our Agreement *another* way; we must have Light out of this thick *Darkness*; and order out of *Confusion*! And herein we are instructed by the Methods of our all-Wise God and Creator, in a case of a Paralel Nature.

For in the Beginning, after he had Created all things out of Nothing, and Spoke things into their Existence, from a formless Mass of Matter, by a wonderful and strange sort of Chimistry; He brought Light out of *Darkness*, and Order out of *Confusion*, and set all things in that most exquisite and incomparable frame and model we see them: And all this, not by altering or changing the nature of things differing (for as necessary He had Created them so) but by bringing things of a like Nature together, or qualifying things of a different Nature, so as to make them Agree, and be Harmonious——But for the present, waving this Observation, it will be necessary I Speak something of **Differences** and **Agreements**; especially of the Nature of **This Agreement**, which I say is Impossible.

Learned Men have employed their Parts, and been over and above Curious and Critical in vain and unnecessary Distinctions; in such sort, that they embroyled the World, and have too much contributed to bring it into the present misery and distraction: I should be heartily glad now at last to see them employ their Talents otherwise, and as they

have distinguished men into Misery and Confusion, so now they would try their Skill to distinguish them out again, and bring the World into Peace and Order: 'Tis but high time they should do so, and would they but distinguish a little and truly inform the world of the Nature of *Unity* and *Dissention*, *Discord* and *Concord*, *Agreement* and *Difference* (for Men have been miserably mistaken about these things) 'tis my Opinion they would not be ill employed.

It ought to be observed, that amongst Christians there are several *sorts* and *kinds* of *Agreements*, and several *sorts* of *Differences*.

First, They Agree in the most principal things, and in what they ought to Agree, and this Agreement they call their Difference, though nothing so; for they all Agree in their endeavours to please God; and their various Lines, however differing in the Circumference, do unite in the Center. 'Tis a Maxime, *That things which Agree in a Third, Agree together*; this being well followed, will Metamorphose most of our *Differences* into *Agreements*. Our belief in the Supream God, and his Son Jesus Christ, pronounce and declare an *Universal Agreement*: Now what are all our various ways and Modes of *Worship*, but so many several Essays and Attempts to please *This* God, and Testifications of our Agreement; and ought rather to be called *parts thereof*, than *Differences*: We all endeavour to *Worship God* after the best manner we can, and must this *way* and this *manner*, and our endeavours herein, be called *Differences*? Indeed the World has branded them along time with that odious appellation, but very improperly, for herein we shew nothing more then our Agreement. But to speak the Truth, this is not the Agreement I contend for, 'tis indeed a sort of Agreement we have, and think not of; 'Tis mixt, Partial and Relative, but not productive of Publick Peace. One Man keeps a Festival thinking to Please God thereby, another is afraid and scru-

ſcrupulous, and will not keep it, thinking to pleaſe him too. Here they both Agree, and both Diſagree. They both agree to Pleaſe God; he that obſerves, and he that obſerves not, obſerves to the Lord, which ought to be a motive of Charity: But then they diſagree and differ one from another, which though they may innocently enough, ye too frequently is made Criminal by exerting their Paſſions to that height, that Charity and their Honeſt Intentions are conſumed in the Flame.

Secondly, *They Agree in what they ought not to Agree, viz.* They Conſpire, Cabal and Agree, to Plague, Vex, and Diſturb one another; and this ought not to be called *an Agreement*, but *a Difference*: And of this Nature was the Agreement of *Herod* and *Pilate*, and of late but too frequently practiced by *Two Parties* of Chriſtians, in order to ruine the *Third*.

Thirdly, When Men *ceaſe to Moleſt and Diſturb one another, they are ſaid to Agree*; and when they have made Stipulations, and Contracts, we call the Tranſaction an *Agreement*.

But the laſt ſort of Agreement (I principally contend againſt, and in my former Diſcourſe have ſhewed to be impoſſible) is that of Men being all of *One Mind, One Judgment, One Apprehenſion in the matters of Religion*, or otherwiſe; and whenever I ſay *Agreement is impoſſible*, I mean, *this ſort of Agreement*, which really is ſo, and no other.

Chriſtian Men have indeed taken indefatigable Pains to bring this Agreement to paſs, and cannot as yet be brought to leave off, although oppoſed by God, Nature, and all things Viſible and Inviſible.

Let us turn our Eyes wherever we Pleaſe, we ſhall ſee nothing but Diverſity and infinite Variety in things; if we look up to Heaven, what ſhall we ſee there, but an innumerable company of Stars, not ranged and in order, but promiſciouſly placed, *hic et ubique*? Indeed if the Sons of Men had been to have placed them, no doubt but they would

would have put them in Rows and in Order; I mean such a position which they call Order: But what they call Order, Unity, and Agreement; The All-Wise God esteems not so; He knows and can see Beauty, Order, and Agreement in different Natures and infinite variety of Things, though *They* cannot; and methinks He plainly speaks from Heaven and tells them so; having Confronted them with such a glorious appearance of infinitely differing but most beautifull *Instructors*; which they cannot miss of seeing, if they will but look upward: I say, one would think they should learn their Lesson out of this glorious Book of Heaven, wrote in such fair and legible Characters, and cease their vain attemps about an universal Order and Agreement. Further, if the Almighty hath not only placed these Heavenly Bodies for Ornament, but also hath empowered them to influence the Bodies and Minds of Men (as 'tis possible he hath, and many suppose and contend for) Then this will aggravate their vanity, in endeavouring to be more in Order, and more Methodised, than their Principals. And they may contend and endeavour to Eternity, but all to no purpose; for when they shall have Power, or be able to remove the Stars from place to place, or form them into what Figures they please, discharge their Influences, or regulate their Promiscuousness: Then, and not till then, shall they be able to bring their Motly Agreement to pass. But as 'tis impossible to do the one, so not more possible to perform the other.

Then again if we cast down our Eyes upon Earth, what shall we see to agree there? 'Tis nothing but a Composition of things of different qualties and natures, a pregnant Mass of Matter, productive of infinite Variety of Forms and Shapes. And this is not its Deformity, but Beauty, and it would be but an unpleasing Heap without it. But after all, we (like Men as we are,) will needs have all to Agree. We would have no Differences, we would have all Men to have One Mind, the Same Opinion, the Same Thought

Thought and Apprehenſion of things, and perform Actions after the ſame Manner and Method; Notwithſtanding all the diſcouragement, and conſtant and ſucceſſive defeats, we have met with in the Proſecution thereof.

For firſt our Maker defeated *Nimrod* and his Accomplices, the old *Babylonian* Builders, who were contriving and forming to themſelves ſtrange univerſal things, under *One Form, One way*, and *One Government*; as alſo of late, in the Reformation, the *New Babylonian Builders*, who were carrying on the ſame work, but in an Eccleſiaſtical manner. And moſt of the great Invaders of the Earth have met with the ſame misfortune; for ſome of their large Dominions and Empires, have at this day ſcarce any being but in Records, and that with great difficulty Preſerved. By God Almighties proceeding and dealings with the ſons of Men in the things of this Nature, he ſeems plainly to tell them, That he is not pleaſed with ſuch their univerſal Proceedings. He never yet proſpered or eſtabliſhed univerſal Kings, or univerſal Churches (excepting for ſome little time to puniſh others) but has always pulled down their Buildings, and reduced them to their primitive Condition and ſtation: And whatever eſteem or value they may put upon univerſal Agreements, univerſal Empire or Churches, it doth plainly appear He has not the *ſame*. For he has divided the Globe of the Earth by Seas, and Rivers, and Mountains, and allotted each Nation its Limits: And this Diviſion is both Ornamental and Neceſſary, and no Diviſion with him at all, for he beholds all the Kingdoms of the Earth, as one Undivided Maſs and Spot of Ground, and all the Generations of Men, as one Stock and Family in one Houſe, but ſeveral Apartments; and though we cry out of Diviſion and Separation, yet he beholds all Chriſtian Aſſemblis *together*, and as in one place, and all to be in the Communion of one Church, as ſo many Figures in one Sum, and all their ſeveral Opinions to be parts of *One* Agreement. So that we need not be ſo fierce to attempt impoſſi-

impossibilities, to fill up the Sea, choak up the Rivers, or level the Mountains, to make all a *Terra Firma*; nor take all that pains which some Men do to reconcile Differences and make all men of One Mind, which is equally impossible: Which brings me again to my first Assertion, which ought a little further to be insisted on.

'Tis impossible that Christians should Agree in the way and nature they would Agree, not onely for the reasons mentioned in my former Discourse, but because there is no common *Standard* fixed and agreed to by all, by which all Parties may take their measures, and square and decide their Pretences. Some will have the Pope to be head of the Church, and to be Infallible, and the sole Judge of all Controversies and Differences; others will have a General Council; some will have both in Conjunction, others neither of them, either apart, or in Conjunction: Some again will have the Scriptures to be Judge, others Tradition; some, Scriptures and Tradition together; others neither Scriptures nor Tradition, but every private Person; Some again will have the Church, others the Fathers, some neither Church nor Fathers. And what a noise have we perpetually sounding in our Ears about Church, Fathers, Councills, and Scriptures, which are true, and which are spurious? The Objections at this time of Day, lie almost equally alike against all. But if they agree, which are the True, they fall out about the Interpretation, and every Party say their own *Comment* is right, and nothing as yet on Earth has been found sufficient and competent to make a *division*. 'Tis not fit that the *less number* should judge for the greater; a *single Man* for a *whole company*, nor a *whole company* for a *single Man*, where the matter is Salvation: The Scriptures indeed are the best Rule, and the best Judge we have, but this onely to private and Particular Persons for themselves, but not for others, not for publick *Communities*; and

and Societies against one another. For the Question, *Who shall interpret them*, will never be answered; a private Person may judge for himself, but not for himself against another; when another is concerned, he is a party, and therefore cannot be Judge: But all the several Sects and Societies of Christians are Parties, therefore cannot be Judges; neither can Reason, Scripture, Tradition, Fathers, Councils, &c. be Judges, being interpreted by Parties; neither is there a Judge on Earth, but is a Party; Our Agreement therefore must be concluded to be impossible, and our Differences left to be judged by the God of Heaven, who is only sufficient and competent for Judgment. From this Impossibility therefore of a material Agreement, proved from the infinite variety of humane Understandings as men, and from the infinite difficulty of things, as Christians, I would lay a Foundation for a formal Agreement, integral and compleat in all its parts, towards God and towards Man; but a further improvment I shall reserve to the foot of my Discourse, and make Answer to a very necessary Question which may be asked me, *viz.* Amidst so great Indeterminations and Irresolutions of men, amidst so many Plausibilities and Probabilities, and infinite Pretentions to Truth, what Measures must Men take, or what Rule must they walk by? To which I answer,

That's a Reason which *convinces*, and that's an Argument which *perswades*, and that's a good Sermon which makes men *better*; besides those which are the best in their kind, and in their own nature really so; and he has understood Councils, and Fathers, and Scriptures right, who understands them in a sense which allows him to mortifie a Lust, crush an evil Affection, or make him a better Man, although he understand them wrong and differing from the original Intent; and 'tis possible for a man to understand wrong, yet live right; to be con-

vinced by a slender Reason, a weak Argument, and edified by an ordinary Sermon: Every one of these, though not the best in their kind, yet are equivalent to the best, if they produce the Effect of the best: And this will put a Check to a great Evil there is in the World, viz. the extravagant Commendation of Preachers, Books and Discourses, raised often to that height, that Charity is infringed and the Peace endangered. Why must the greatest and most sublime Reasons be pressed upon me, when one of a lesser magnitude doth convince me? And I be forced to hear, and may be vilified for not commending such a Brave Preacher, when one of another Stile and another Method doth more operate upon me, and give me better Satisfaction? There is a necessity that Truth should be served up and addressed to men in various and differing VVays and Methods, because there are Men of various and differing Understandings to be wrought upon; and hereby all Books, Comments and Discourses, infinitely differing one from another, according to the differing Capacities and Apprehensions of their Authors, become useful and profitable. And this in a great measure may serve for answer to the Question; but that which must make it compleat, is an honest Heart and sincere Endeavours of finding out the Truth, and a ready and willing Disposition to comply with it when found: And when men have done their best to please God, and find out the Truth, (as every Party of Christians say they do) if they mistake, they mistake *like Men*, and God will never punish them for it, for that would be to punish them for doing their best, which ought to be far from the thoughts of every good Christian; so that though they be not sure, yet they may be safe, safe I say from the Displeasure and Punishment of their Maker, though not of their Fellow-Creatures. For whereupon have been diligent, honest and sincere, and used their utmost Endeavours to find

out the Truth, please God, and save their Souls, in comes a harmless Band of Humane Sanctions, Laws, Penalties and Compulsion, to drive them out of this way, which they have judged and pitched upon to be the only true way to Salvation; which brings me to the second Head to be discoursed of in order to the Peace of *Christendom*, and that is Law; which I shall publickly and solemnly arrest, as the grand Enemy and Disturber thereof.

For in the name of the King of Peace, what has Law to do in Religion? Religion ought to be the most free, most voluntary and unconstrained thing in the World; he that ministers in it, ought to do it freely and willingly, and he that performs any Action in it, ought to choose it, and be fully convinced and satisfied in his Mind; and no Method ought to be used either in the Administration or Propagation, but Argument, Reason and Discourse; and it must be acknowledged as a most certain Truth, That if the whole World joyn together to make a Law, this Law cannot make a Reason a good Reason, or an Argument a good Argument, or make any Proposition either true or false; and if we ask any party of Christians why they use such a Method or such a way in Religion? Their Answer is, Because they think it true. Since Truth then is and ought to be the Standard and Measure, by which men ought to determine their Choice, and since it is most certain, that Law cannot make or determine Truth, Law by a plain and necessary consequence must be judged useless in Religion. Again, If Actions are not voluntary, and Religion be not chosen, there will be no Grounds left for either Rewards or Punishments. *Nil ardet in Inferno nisi propria voluntas*, nothing burns in Hell but a Man's Will: 'Tis the Will that makes men criminal, and subject to be rewarded or punished; but when there is a Law, there is no Room left either for will or to choose, but it comes with a *must*, with Authority

thority and Power, and puts both Religion, our Will and Choice out of doors. And here one may eaſily diſcover the Paw of the *Grand Impoſtor* and Enemy of Mankind, who when he foreſaw what great Advantages the Religion of the *Holy Jeſus* would bring to the Sons of Men, by a ſly and crafty Device ſpirited away the *True Babe*, and left us a *Changeling* in his room; he ſtole away *Religion* and left us a *Law*, and ſo effectually brought about his curſed Deſigns and ruin'd us. But further, amongſt Proteſtant Chriſtians Law is the moſt abſurd and vain thing in the world, for they do, (and that truly) acknowledge *the Books of the Old and New Teſtament* to be *the Only Rule of Faith*, containing full and ample Inſtructions how *to Worſhip God*, and perform all neceſſary Actions in *Religion*; alſo that men in common are able to underſtand, interpret and judge of theſe Books.

Now if theſe be their Rule and only Rule, what have they to do with *Law* which is another Rule? Our *Saviour* ſaith, *His Yoke is eaſie, his Burden light*; But *Law* is a Tyrant and Uſurper of Chriſtian Privileges, and lays on heavy Burdens, contrary to the ſweet and gentle Methods of the *Goſpel*; it neither is nor ought to be a Rule to Chriſtians in their *Religion*, and in things relating to another World, though it may in their ſecular Concerns, and in what may relate to this. But ſome will ſay that *Law* is not another Rule, but the ſame, and that it is conſonant to the *Scriptures*: But who muſt be Judge of all this? If one Party uſurp the Power of Judges, 'tis an injury done to all the reſt, and all Proteſtants have been allowed the Priviledge of judging for themſelves, being to be puniſhed themſelves: therefore whatever party uſurps Judgment, makes a *Law*, or affixes a *Penalty*, are to be looked on as Tyrants, and as thoſe who bring in a Forreign Power, and invade the Priviledges of their Brethren. But ſuppoſe it agreeable to *Scripture*, what then?

them? Why then it will be agreeable to Scriptures, and so the Point is gained; it will have no Penalty, because Scripture enjoyns no Penalty, and so by consequence will be no *Law*, but will dwindle away into another thing, and must have another name, a Scripture Inference, or a Declaration what is Truth and agreeable to Scripture, such are all humane Sanctions in relation to *Religion*. Men think they have done something and that they are Patrons, and that they have made *Laws*, when alas they have done nothing, they give their Children Names before they are born. It must be acknowledged in all Human and Secular Affairs, that in any Kingdom or State Majority of Consent can make a Sanction which may take the Appellation of a *Law*, and pass an Obligation of Obedience, and charge a Penalty on the Breach. But in Religion and divine Matters, and things of Eternity, the Scene is changed. These are things *alienæ Provinciæ & alienæ fori*, of another Nature and another Jurisdiction. The Powers of the Earth have nothing to do here, being neither competent for Cognizance, nor sufficient to give Judgment in such Matters. Their making Laws and meddling in such Matters as these, have set the World in a Flame, and when rightly considered, it cannot be expected it should be otherwise. For Temporal things hold no proportion with Eternal, nor the Laws of God with the Laws of Man: That God has given some more particular and special Laws to Mankind is most certain, because he knows the best Contrivances, and most refined Inventions of Men would be insufficient, and fall short of reaching all Emergencies: Therefore he has reserved the Cognizance of such special Laws as a particular Prerogative to himself, and that in the Court of *Heaven*, and not in any humane Judicature. These Laws I mean are the Laws in Mens *Consciences*, the Laws of *Truth* and *Revelation*, which neither are greater number for a less, nor

a less for a greater, nor any one Man for Another, is to judge of, but every single and individual Man for himself, and this because every single Man must answer for himself, and be punished for himself and not for another. Further, the *Eternal God* has fixed *Eternal Rewards* and *Eternal Punishments* to the performance or non-performance of his *Laws*: And it is the highest *Reason* imaginable, that Men should not in the least be hindred, but have all the Freedom which the World is able to afford them, in a disquisition of so great and infinite *Importance*, as the *Salvation* of their *Souls*, and obtaining *Eternal Happiness*, or shunning *Eternal Misery*. And however plausibly interested Men and the Politicians of the World may discourse for Coercion, their *Reasons* are vain and foolish. For 'tis a most certain *Truth*, That no *Christian Prince* can be long safe on his *Throne*, nor any *State* long in Peace, where there is any *Let* or *Hindrance* in these things. For what is able to counterballance or stand in Competition with *Eternity*? What will not Christian Men really believing in another World, do to obtain *Eternal Happiness* or shun *Eternal Misery*? All humane Sanctions, though contrived with never so great Art and Subtilty, have hitherto been baffled, and snap'd asunder like *Simpson's Cords*, when these *Mighty Philistins* have come upon them. When the God of *Heaven* speaks, where shall Mortal Man appear? What can humane Sanctions do, when a *Divine Law* appears? When *Eternity* speaks, what can *Temporal Punishments* prevail? Hitherto they have not prevailed, and I think I may safely affirm they never will.

Laws in *Religion* therefore must be granted me to have no other Tendency but to disturb Men, and to be a most effectual Receipt how to keep on foot all the *Plots* and *Contrivances* which Perplex the Christian World. Every Side and Party do really believe, that the Way and Method they

they have chose to *Worship* their Maker, is the Best, the Truest, and most conducive to make them *Eternally Happy*, and what can be supposed to be the Consequence of a Hinderance and a coercive Law to Men so thinking, then what we see daily practised by all of them, *viz.* *Plotting* and *Contriving* to ruine one another? Can it be supposed that a Man should be easie when he is put out of that way which he really believes the only way that leads to *Eternal Life*? But if it be supposed he may be easie in such a Case; yet it cannot be supposed that he should be easie (if he be in his Sences) when he is put into the ready way to *Damnation*, and consigned to *Eternal Burnings*, which every Side and Party think they are, when by a Law they are forced out of their way? Who then will appear an Advocate for Law in *Religion*, which has such a Natural Propensity to pull down *Monarchs*, unhinge *Governments*, dishonour *God* and ruine *Men*; I wish I was at a loss for Instances; but alas! they are too ready at hand, our own unhappy *Nation* has too long been a Scene of Troubles on this Account. For whereas we have all done our best (as all sides will say) to please our *Maker*, and every one strove who should come nearest the Mark: yet some has had the good Fortune to be Esteemed and Rewarded, others to be reproached and punished, and all for doing and endeavouring the same things, and all this by a discriminating and intervening Law, which can make none of our ways either true or false, good or bad? And it must be acknowledged that the word *Dissent* is a Relative Term, and implies one we dissent from, and if I dissent from another, another dissents from me? So we are both Dissenters, and Law cannot turn the Scale (being no Judge) so that it is a most unreasonable thing, since all Arrows are taken out of the same Quiver, and equal Probabilities and Plausibilities brought by all Parties from Scriptures, Fathers, &c. that one should be respected a-

bove

have another [illegible] *Religion*, or rather *Opinion*, Established by Law, [illegible] and *Hic pretium sceleris Cracem tulere hic Diadema*; *Alexander* for Robbing is called a *Conqueror*, but another a *Banditti*; one gets a *Crown*, the other a *Gibbet*; one for dissenting is rewarded, and another for dissenting is punished, though both have a like Pretentions to Truth.

'Tis Law therefore in *Religion* which I impeach as a Disturber of the Peace of *Christendom*, an Occasion of *Plots*, a Fomenter of *Sedition*, *Faction* and *Rebellion*; and of most of the *Animosities* amongst us, which being taken away, innumerable Advantages of Peace would ensue. (But of those in the Conclusion) What for the present I shall further add, is (with their leave) the *Templers Motto*, with some Variation, (leaving out the Sword as a strange Instrument) and that is,

Let the Truth Live,
And the Law give
[illegible]

As also what the Prophet speaks, *Isa.* 56. and 16. The time being now come, saith the Lord, *That he who blesseth himself in the Earth, [illegible] himself in the God of Truth; [illegible] Earth, [illegible] by the God of Truth [illegible] are forgotten, and because they are [illegible] from mine Eyes.*) Which brings me to the third Thing I designed to discourse of in order to Peace [illegible] of her Government, [illegible] Separation must be made [illegible] Temporals must be [illegible] from Spirituals, and Secular from Eternals, although [illegible] ensue thereby [illegible] *Let once*, [illegible] the

he

he by his Prophet *Haggai*, *It is a little while and I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea and the dry Land, and I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House* (meaning the Temple) *with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts: The Glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts:* **And in this Place will I give Peace,** *saith the Lord of Hosts.* Here let me make my Paraphrase: *By shaking the Heavens and the Earth, &c.* is not meant a literal Sence, as some would have, nor are the Material Heavens to be so shaken, but hereby is meant all the Kingdoms, Constitutions and Governments of the World; and that the Prophet means so, is plain by *verse* 21 and 22. where he saith, *Speak to Zerubbabel Governour of Judah, saying, I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, and I will overthrow the Throne of the Kingdoms, and destroy the Strength of the Kingdoms of the Heathen, and I will overthrow the Chariots, &c.* And what is meant by *the Desire of all Nations?* 'Tis Halcyon days, a peaceable Time, the flourishing of the Gospel, the calling of the *Jews*, and what our Saviour Prayed for, *Thy Kingdome come, thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*: *The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine*; that is, I can Adorn and make this Temple as Rich and as Beautiful as I please: I want nothing which may Embellish it, for *the Silver and the Gold is mine, and so are the Cattle of a thousand Hills*, as he told *David*; but 'tis not my Desire that should be Adorned with Silver or Gold, and yet the Glory of it shall be greater than the former, *for in this Place will I give Peace.* Here by this Temple cannot be meant a Material Temple, either formerly built or to be built, neither of the two Former, because it must Exceed them in Glory, and the Glory must not consist in a glittering shew of Silver or Gold, but of

Peace: Where let me note, that God doth plainly intimate little Peace has hitherto been in the World, and therefore as a special Blessing doth promise, that Peace shall be the peculiar Ornament of this Latter Temple; and that we may depend upon his Word and Promise, four Times *saith the Lord of Hosts*, is mentioned in these four *Verses*, sufficient Asseverations to Engage the Faith of a mortal Man. But I cannot leave off my Comment here, but for the Sake and Consolation of the scattered Tribes, shall bring the *Prophet's* Words again to the File. *Yet once, &c.* by which the Living God plainly intimates, That he had often shaken the Heavens and the Earth before, that is, the Governments and Kingdoms of the *World*, for the *Material Heavens* and *Earth* were so far from being shaken *often*, that since the *Creation*, they *were* never *shaken once*; for that of the *Deluge*, was not a shaking the Earth or the Heavens, but only a Permission of one Element some time to be Predominant, and to return again to its Duty. But not to Expound it by Parts, The Eternal God, the Lord of Hosts, doth seem plainly to say thus: *Ye Sons of Jacob mine Heritage, my Chosen, Weep not, but be Comforted; though your latter House falls short of the Glory of the former, though you cannot Adorn it with so much Silver and Gold, weep not, I have Silver and Gold enough, I accept your Will and good Endeavours; and know ye, That Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my Footstool, What Temple can you make for me? I value not Houses or Temples, for the Substance of these things have mine Hand made; but him I value who is Poor, and of a Contrite Spirit, and Trembleth at my Word; but cease your Lamentations and Weeping, though the Glory of the former Temple does far Exceed the Glory of this your latter Temple, yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, and will build you a Temple* (not a Material One) *whose Glory shall far Exceed the Glory of the former, and in this Place will I give* Peace *saith the Lord of Hosts.*

The

The Lord of Hosts is now about to build this Glorious Temple of Peace, *he is Faithful who hath Promised, he is beginning to shake the Nations; and to perform his Covenant to his People; Yet a little while and the* Gentiles *shall bring his Heritage and his Chosen for an Offering to the Lord out of all Nations, upon Horses, and in Chariots, and in Litters, and upon Mules, and upon swift Beasts, to his Holy Mountain at* Jerusalem, *as he has spoken by the Mouth of his Prophet; Rejoyce ye therefore with* Jerusalem, *and be glad with her, all ye that Love her; Rejoyce for Joy with her, all ye that Mourn for her.*

But here I must note that this Promise is made to all Nations, but particularly to the *Jews* and to the *Christians*; when to the *Jews*, it is called a Temple; when to *Christians*, a Church: The first, long since have had their Temple, their High-Priest and *Hierarchie*, abolished. The latter; have theirs still in being, which Symbolizes much with the Former, and must Symbolize with their Fate, for they must now be pulled down.

Of CHURCH *and* STATE.

HERE is a very great Error, and we form to ourselves very hurtful and foolish Notions of things, we suppose the Church and State to be *Two* Things, and in all our Discourses name them as *Twice*, whereas they *really* are but *One*: for the Church *is in* the State, or rather *is* the State; for when the Nations of the World at first became *Christian*, and receiv'd the Faith of *Jesus*, they became *better* Nations, and the Inhabitants *better* People, having receiv'd *better* Maxims and Principles, but still the *same* People; and they stood in *Statu quo*, as to all Power or Administration of their Affairs. The Religion which

came amongst them, made no alteration of Things, but for the *better*, gently infusing it self with as little noise as Rain on a Fleece of Wool: its Ministry was of *Grace* and *Godliness*, and not of *Empire* and *Dominion*; it claimed no Power, being it wanted none; its whole Design and Drift relating to things of another World, or tending to promote *Peace* and *Godliness* in this; and happy had it been for *Christendom* had its Nations and States only been called *Christian*, and its Princes looked on this Religion only as good Qualities in their Subjects, tending to promote *Obedience* and *Peace* in their Kingdoms, and gave it an Establishment on this Account: And the so much celebrated Name of *Church*, had never been heard of in the Nature it has been used. Also when they sent Judges to minister Justice to their Subjects, had they with them sent Ministers to Preach the Gospel, and continued it in such a sort of way to this Time, I am perswaded the Author would never had occasion to write Expedients for Peace at this day. But here lay their Mistake, seeing its Ministry was of *Grace* and *Godliness*, and not of *Empire* and *Dominion*, they looked on the thing *in* them, as divided *from* them; and would needs give it a *new* Name, and invest it with *Power*, which though little at first, by degrees rival'd their *own*, and since has jostled many of them out of their Thrones. And now they have Leasure to Repent themselves of their bad Project, in dividing the Accidents from their Subject, and setting up Non-entities. For the Church is nothing at all, a mere Metaphysical Term; and when *Christian Princes* Govern their *People* well, they Govern the *Church* well: for the Church is in the People, or rather the People are the Church. But if they set up a Regiment or a Government in their Kingdoms distinct from their own, they do but Nurse a *Viper* in their own Bosoms, and they cannot in Reason expect their Crowns should

ſhould ever ſit eaſie on their Heads amidſt the unavoidable Emulation of two diſtinct Governments. The Church and State are a *Chriſtian State*, and but *one*, and ſo at firſt appointed by the God of Heaven, and what God hath joyned, no man ought to put aſunder. And I humbly conceive, that Men profeſſing Chriſtianity, ought to have no diſtinct Government from the State, I am ſure they were much better Chriſtians when they had none. The Apoſtles propagated the Faith of *Jeſus* in the *Gentile* World, and the *Eccleſiæ*, or *Aſſemblies*, congregated to perform Acts of Devotion in the way which they had Taught, are called Churches; and when we read of the Churches of *Aſia*, or of this or that Church, nothing elſe is to be underſtood but the Congregation of *Believers* met to pay *Homage* and *Worſhip* to their Maker in the Name of *Jeſus*; which was done in a plain and ſimple Manner, never interfering with, or diſturbing the Government of the Place. Neither Power, nor Policy or Skill, can be needful for a few honeſt and innocent Men, to meet together in a peaceable manner to Worſhip God, all the Requiſites in ſuch a Caſe, are only a *Sincere Heart*, and a *Willing Mind*: What need we then ſo much Eccleſiaſtical Policy and Church-Government? Or if we muſt have it, why muſt ſuch *Frames* and *Machines* be called the Church? This is to call the Scaffold, the Building. But after all, 'tis moſt certain, that only *True Believers* and *good Livers* are the Stones which make up that Heavenly Building, and are the only True Church of Chriſt, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall be never able to prevail.

But we talk of ſetting *up* or pulling *down* Churches, in as material a Sence, as when we Erect or pull down Houſes; and one laments the pulling down ſuch a rare Eſtabliſhed Church, and mightily oppoſes the Building of another, and we all think our *own Cottages*, *Pallaces*;

and

and are always commending our *own Church*, and discommending anothers; and such a stir we make about our *Churches*, that makes us *Ridiculous* to all the World; and no wonder *Christendom* has been so long Embroiled, since we have had so many *Churches*, that is, so many Occasions and Causes of *Disturbance*.

There is but *One* God, *one* Christ, *one* Faith, *one* Baptism, *one* Religion, and but *one* Church; and the several Perswasions, make but one *Religion*; and several ways of *Worship* and distinct *Congregations* but *one* Church: But we call the Parts the whole, and a single House a Town, and are in a continual Alarm in Defence of our little Respective Cittadels. And to that height of Abuse is the Name of Church now Grown; that to be of This or That Church, is to compound for a good Life; and Men think if they belong to *such* or *such* a Communion, all will go well with them; and having so many Parties amongst us, and so many Interests to be served, the necessity of proselyting Men to their side, rather than to *Goodness* or *Truth*, doth but too much contribute to it; and *some Guides* are but too willing to indulge Men in their Vice, so they will but be of *their* Party: But however we may value our selves, one for being of *this* Church, and another for being of *that*; I am afraid if we live not good Lives, we shall be found at last to be of *no* Church at all. Our Saviour tells us, *he that doth Righteousness, is Righteous*; *and that the Tree is known by its Fruit*; if we Live well, we shall be of God's Church, and if we Live ill, we shall certainly be *out* of the Church: however we may be admitted by Men with the greatest *Solemnity* and *Ceremony* into that Society we call by that Name. *Templum Domini*, *Templum Domini*, was the Cry of the *Jews*, and now is the Cry of the *Christians*, and sufficiently abused by both. We all know the Fate of theirs, and the Reasons;

and

and in knowing this, we may eaſily Calculate the Fate of our own: For their *Temple* and our *Church* exactly anſwer one another, I mean our *Political Hierarchical Church*; The Conſtitution of which, is fixed in a Diametrical Oppoſition to *Publick Peace*, and we can never expect Peace to flouriſh in *Chriſtendom*, ſo long as one Stone of this ill-built Fabrick doth lie upon another. Then in order to the Pulling down this *Myſtical Babel*,

I here moſt ſolemnly declare and proteſt againſt all the *Preſent Conſtitutions* and *Eccleſiaſtical Corporations* of *Chriſtendom*, as injurious to *Publick Peace* and *Tranquility*, and very much diſſerving all *Temporal Government*, thwarting and croſſing the juſt Deſigns of *Princes*, and on all Occaſions miniſtring to *Faction*, *Sedition* and *Rebellion*, and againſt all differing *Sects* and *Diviſions* of Chriſtians whatſoever, which are any way endowed with *Immunities*, *Priviledges*, or any Temporal *Power*, *Preferment* or *Beneſices*, independant of the State. And ſince all the *Princes* and *States* of *Chriſtendom* are in a Fermentation and Motion, 'tis my Opinion, that if they would (after an Act Paſſed for the Relief of the Preſent Incumbents) ſeize all *Temporal Endowments* and *Beneſices* appropriated to *Religion* or *Churches*, and diſſolve and make Null all *Eccleſiaſtical Decrees*, *Canons*, *Charters* and *Conſtitutions*. They would do the greateſt Service to *Chriſtianity*, *Publick Peace*, and Themſelves, as ever has happened to the World, ſince the firſt Propagation of ſo Holy a Religion. *Oue agathon polycoironie*, *&c.* ſaith the old Poet; which with deference, I interpret, One *Government*, and one *Power* in a Nation, is enough. But if *Eccleſiaſtical Government* muſt go down, ſome like *Saul*, will be for ſaving *Amaleck* and the beſt of the Cattle, their Wealth and Riches: To which I anſwer, theſe muſt not be ſaved, for *Dominion* and *Power* are inſeparable to Wealth and Riches; therefore theſe muſt be ſacrificed

crificed, before *God's Wrath can be appeased, or Peace be ſettled in our Iſrael.* But in Anſwer, methinks I hear a great noiſe of *Profaneneſs*, *Sacrilege*, and the *Ruine* of of all Religion, but I ſhall be deaf to the Objection, ſince in plain truth, the *Engliſh* of it is no more *Then Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians. For Religion would not at all be in hazard or concerned in ſo great a Change, but would be purified and cleanſed, and appear much more amiable and Eligible, it would but diveſt her of her ſordid Rags, knock off her Fetters, and leading her out of the Squalid Priſon of *Terrene* and Temporal Mixtures, cloath her with *Royal Robes*, and reſtore her to her *Throne* and *Dignity*.

The Religion of the *Holy Jeſus* is (God be thanked, at this time of the Day) ſo well propagated, that there is no danger of its being loſt, if *Honours*, and *Preferments*, and all Secular *Advantages* be diſcharged her *Retinue*, and ſecluded her Family: For they make no Conſtituent or Eſſential Parts of her, but are things which her miſtaken but well-meaning Votaries have given her, to Adorn and Bedeck her, but really have diſguiſed and deformed her. For her *Government* and *Empire* is *over*, nay *in* the *Hearts* and *Conſciences* of Men; teaching them to live good Lives, and to follow the Example and Precepts of the moſt Holy Author, whoſe Life and Doctrine was a of ſpiritual Nature, abſtracted and ſeparate from all Vain Glory, Pomp and Splendor, who did utterly Renounce the dividing of Inheritances, and publickly declare his Kingdom was not of this World.

His *Religion* therefore miniſtring in the Affairs of his *own* Kingdom, *viz.* of Heaven, Grace and Glory, ought to be kept ſeparate and pure, and not mixt with the Things and Powers of this World. The Engliſh of *Mille per Ann.* is not taking up the Croſs, nor does Grace and Godlineſs ecchо right to Honours and Revenues. Faith,

Hope

Hope and Charity are *Fundamentum, Paries & Tectum*; The *Foundation, Walls* and *Roof* of Christ's *True Church* upon Earth; other Structures which we call Churches, are nothing at all, and if we can procure Means, or get Builders to rear this *Heavenly Fabrick*, implant these *Essential Qualifications* in the Hearts of Men, our Work is done. The old *Building* must come down, and the old *Builders* must be rejected, who have built with untempered *Morter*; have mixt Temporals with Spirituals; instead of *Humility* and *Charity*, have put Pride and Ambition; and in the room of *Mortification* and *Self-denyal*, have placed Wealth and Honours, and have fenced all about with a *High Wall* of an usurped Power and Authority. Other *Measures* therefore must be taken, and a new *Administration* exhibited, since most of what hitherto have been taken, must be acknowledged to be *mistaken*, and not calculated for publick Peace.

Christ has been *Preached* indeed, Grace *Administred*, and Souls *Saved*; but the *Manner* and *Method* of Administration has been *irregular* and *unhappy*, Ministring rather Matter of *Disturbance*, than any Advantages to the *Affairs* of *Princes* and *Government* of the World. The many unhappy *Monarchs* disturbed in their Measures of *Government*, by strugling Parties, and contending Churches, abused by *Ambitious* and *Discontented Bishops*; especially by him who is so notorious, and has so often Signalized himself by Affronting *Crowned Heads*, and perplexing their *Affairs*, are sad Instances, and but too easily Verifie the Charge.

And for the several Forms and Ways of *Discipline* and *Administration*, however all Parties and Sects of *Christians* pretend they find them in the *Scriptures*; They are no more able to find them there, than they are able to find the several Figures of *Birds*, *Beasts* and *Fishes* in the *Heavens*, which the *Astrologers* tell us are there. They may find *faint Resemblances* indeed, but no *Plain* and self-evi-

evident *Schemes*? The Reason is, because none is of *Absolute* Necessity to *Salvation*, and we must entertain very mean and low Thoughts of the *Goodness* of the All-wise Being, to let poor Mortals ramble in the *Dark* for so many *Ages*, and subject them to an *Eternal Search* and wrangling about Schemes and Forms of *Government* of his Church. If any at all had been absolutely necessary, his *Blessed Son*, who came to Reveal all his Will, would have fixed it as plain as the Sun in the *Firmament*, that it should not be in our Power to mistake: And if no *Church-Government* at all be necessary, then it follows of Course, that no particular *Way* or *Model* is necessary; and indeed if we consider things narrowly, a Coat may as well be made for the *Moon*, as any particular Way be prescribed. The Flux and Reflux, and infinite uncertainty of humane Affairs, will not admit of it; as long and as often as *Men sin*, they must be *Punished*, but this cannot be done, unless there be *Disturbances*, and setting up and pulling down *Kingdoms*, *Nations* and *Families*; and since it is necessary there should be so great *Changes*, what particular Scheme can be drawn to fit all *Circumstances*? But some will send me to the *Apostles* and to the *Primitive Times*: But to this I answer, That what they might then prescribe, ought not to be drawn down for a *President* to these Times. The Church then was under *Heathens* and *Persecutors*, and but in its Infancy, and if we take their *Measures*, we put a Childs Coat on a Man's Back, which is but an ill sight; but yet it is done by us, and is a Folly we are so fond of, that neither the *Inconveniences* we labour under, nor the *just Offence* we incur thereby, can make us forego. We find indeed in the Scriptures, *Episcopi*, *Presbiteri*, *Diaconi*, but not exhibited to us in such commanding and indispensable *Terms*, as to pass an *Obligation* and *Necessity* upon all *Ages* of the Church, and all *Mankind*, to have the *same*. But if Men usefully serving the *Same Purposes* and *Ends*, and

more Conducive to Publick *Tranquillity* in these latter *Ages* of the World, after so great a *Change* of *Circumstances* and *Corruption* of *Manners*; by the Supream Power of any *Nation* shall be thought fit to be chosen, no matter whether they have the *same Names* or no, or any *Names* at all, so they serve the *same Ends*; for the *Business* of *Christianity* is not a thing of *Names* and *Titles*, but a *Substantial* Thing, productive of Holiness, Piety, and Charity: And whatsoever *Person* or *Thing* which may be thought *Fit* and *Convenient* to promote her *Interest*, and *Minister* to her Necessity, may without Scruple be adopted into her *Family*. And all *Present Methods* of *Government* and *Ways* of Administration, if found disserving the *Ends* of Publick *Peace* and *True Religion*, may be innocently dissolved, and new ones *Chosen*, according to the *Wisdom* and *Discretion* of the *Supream Power*. And the Reason is, because all *Offices* and *Functions* Ecclesiastical, and *all* Methods and Ways of *Administration* in the *Religion* of the *Holy Jesus*, make no parts of it, but are *Extrinsecal* to the Nature of the thing, therefore may be changed or altered on the forementioned Account.

The greatest *Opposition* to *this* will be made by those who pretend to their *Functions* by a *Commission* from Heaven, and by a *Divine Right*; but these are of two sorts. The first I believe will quickly lay down their *Pretensions*, when the *Grandeur* of the Church is *Diminished*, and her *Power*, her *Law*, and *Riches*, are taken away; The latter, who may be innocently Abused, and think themselves under an indispensable *Obligation* of Preaching the Gospel, must be let alone, there is no Remedy for them but *Time*, which 'tis possible by degrees may let them see their Error, and lessen their *High Flown Ideas* of their Fitness, and sufficiency of undertaking so great a *Charge*. But however it may happen, the *Predication* of no *Pretenders* can affect the Publick Peace, when both *Law* and *Power* to do hurt, are taken from them, and the Matter and Subject of their

Discourses are purely *Spiritual*, and relating to the things of *another World*.

But by way of Recapitulation, & in order to a Conclusion. The Foundations to be laid for a *New Settlement*, are, First, *The Impossibility of Agreement, and Innocency of Differences*. Secondly, *That the Church be converted into a Christian State, that she needs no Law, no Power, or Revenues*. Thirdly, *That whatever Forms or Ways of Administration in Religion, or the Church, hath hitherto been used, may innocently and lawfully be changed*. Then the Plain and necessary Consequences will be these:

When *Agreement* is *Impossible*, Men will *cease* to attempt it; and when *Differences* are made *Innocent*, the infinite variety of Understandings and Apprehensions of Men will be no more hurtful or offensive, then their different Faces: When there is *no Government*, all Contentions which is the *right*, will cease; and where there is *no* Law, there will be *no* Transgression, and by consequence *no* Delinquents to be punished; and when there is *no* Power, there will be *no* danger of abusing it; And how soon shall we see the the flames of Contention *cease*, when the combustible Fuel of Wealth, and Power, and Honours, are taken away? But further, At the very sound of impossibility of Agreement, a cessation of *all* Controversies must necessarily ensue, and this Doctrine doth presently summon all the most skilful and learned in the Art of Wrangling, to lay down their Arms and live Peaceably; and how happy must the Christian World be, when rid of such Seditious Captains, that so long have disturbed her Peace? Then the Doctrine of *no Government*, is not less Advantageous and Beneficial; for at one breath it tumbles down all Ecclesiastical Hierarchies, and gives ease to the *groaning* and *miserable Potentates* of the Earth; it answers all the Prayers of the Saints for many Ages; and like a voice from Heaven, or the Trump of God, Tumbles down the mighty Man of

Sin

Sin, or Whore of *Babylon*, from her Throne: And methinks I see the Princes of the Earth already in Council against her, to pull down her Pride, and diveſt her of her Power, which ſo long has been uſed againſt them: Then for *Law*, that being baniſhed, Chriſtian Men would then begin to look Innocently, and the great Machine of Perſecution and Rapine would fall to the Ground; Wicked Men would have no pretence to exerciſe their Cruelties, and the Earth would no more Groan and Cry out for Vengeance for the Blood of Saints, Martyrs, and Profeſſors, that has been ſpilled upon her: 'Tis theſe Laws that are the ſharp Teeth with which Chriſtians devour one another; they might Diſpute and Argue with Innocence and Safety, were but theſe Weapons lay'd out of their way, which they too often ſnatcht to compleat the Victory, and to the ruine of each other.

But by this time men will ſay my deſign tends to unhinge all Governments, to deſtroy all Laws, and to make nothing but *Confuſion* in the World: To this I anſwer, That there was Darkneſs before Light, Confuſion before Order, and whoever will have a new Houſe, muſt have ſome trouble in the building, and endure the Inconveniencies of puling down the old One: But this is not ſufficient, but in further anſwer to the Objection, I deſire to have it obſerved, That the Chriſtian World *is in Confuſion already*, that I *make* no diſturbance, but *find* it; that I cannot Confound them more then they are already Confounded; that Governments are unhinged, and Laws broke, and Princes in Arms, ready to deſtroy one another, and one of the principal occaſions is *Religion*; therefore ſome great thing is the matter; 'Tis either in the Religion it ſelf, or in the Managery and Adminiſtration of it; the firſt I acquit; the latter I lay my Accuſation againſt, and charge the Adminiſtrators with aſſuming *Power* and making *Laws*, and Erecting a *Mock Government*, which

which has Ruined and Confounded the State, and all *True* Laws and *True* Governments: I therefore shall take the Liberty to move and suggest some Considerations for a New and Better way of Administration, and I hope my undertaking will find a Favourable Acceptance amongst all good Men.

Then the Administration of the Religion of the Holy *Jesus*, may be divided into two parts, *Ordinary* and *Extraordinary*: the *Ordinary*, which consists of Prayers and Praises, and Dispensations of Charity, to be Perform'd by *ordinary* Men; I hope it will not be deny'd me, but that Men in Common are capable of performing such things, after some few Lessons taught them of the nature and attributes of the Being they are to Petition and Adore: other Requisites are only a *Sence* of their Wants, and Mercies received, which almost naturally will make them both *Eloquent* and *Grateful*. As to their meeting together, this will require no great Art or Subtilty, nor will the *Time* and *Place* meet with greater Difficulty: *Wherever Two or Three are gathered together in my Name*, saith our Saviour, *I will be in the midst of them*; there is neither Time and Place mentioned, nor the Quality or Capacities of the Persons to meet, but all runs in an indefinite Manner. By *two or three*, either may be meant so many, in a literal Sence, or a certain Number for an uncertain, but however a *posse* to congregate, or gather together, must necessarily be implyed and allowed to Men in common, from this indefinite Text. And notwithstanding all the great noise of Disagreement, Dissenters and Schismaticks, if Men can *agree* so to meet together to pay Homage to the great God in the Name of Jesus, their Agreement is sufficient, and here is a Blessing promised them from this plain Text, which I hope will be sufficient to discharge me from the Reproach of an Innovator. As for their *Matter* and *Way*, &c. God must be Judge

of

of it, and not Men. Let there therefore be given to Men a Power to Congregate, and in their Reſpective Congregations, let them chooſe what Men they think fit to diſpence their Charity, and to be Judges of the Lives of their Fellows, ſo as to Expell them their Congregations if Occaſion require. Let them call theſe men by *what Names* they pleaſe. But let there be *no Laws* amongſt them, but thoſe of *Reverence* and *Reſpect*, of *Shame* and *Fear*, which are *the beſt and only Laws* which Chriſtians ought to have in their *Oeconomy*. But if they break theſe gentle Bonds, Then *Currat Lex*, let the Secular Power take Place. This for the *ordinary part* of the Adminiſtration to be performed by *ordinary* men, or men *in Common*. As for the *Extraordinary*, which is the Adminiſtration of the *Word* and *Sacraments*, to be performed by Men ſeparated, and of better Capacities, let it be thus:

When the Supream Power of each *Chriſtian Nation*, have ſet themſelves *in Statu quo*, diſſolved all Eccleſiaſtical Governments, and reſumed from the Church her uſurped and deſtructive Power and Revenues, (the firſt muſt be never given her again, the laſt put to better Uſes.) 'Then I ſay let them build and Erect in the midſt 'of each Reſpective Nation, *Magnum Collegium Chriſtianum*, a large Chriſtian Colledge, and Endow it with 'ſuch Priviledges and Conveniences, as may be thought 'fit and Proper, *&c. Then let the Wiſdom of each Nation*, (after having asked their Willingnels) *chooſe a 'conſiderable number of Youth, of the hopefulleſt Conſtitution of Body and Mind; and after publick Addreſſes made 'to the Living God, by Faſting and Prayer, for an auſpicious 'Election, let Lots be Caſt, and on whom the Lots do fall, 'let them receive an Order from the State, to Enter into the 'ſaid Colledge, to Fit and Qualifie themſelves to be Preachers and Miniſters of the Goſpel; and after ſuch a Term

'of

of years continuance, as ſhall be thought fit, let a certain number be brought forth; and the queſtion of Willingneſs being asked, and Addreſſes made to Heaven, as afore ſaid, let Lots proportioned to the National Wants be caſt, and on whom the Lots do fall, let a convenient and honourable Allowance be ſetled, and let them receive their Commiſſion from the State, to Preach the Kingdom of Heaven, and Jeſus Chriſt Crucified, and Miniſter the Word and Sacraments in a plain, decent, and orderly manner, as near as poſſible they can to the firſt Inſtitution: And when the Judges ſet out in the King or States Name, to diſtribute Juſtice, and determine Law, let them alſo per Order *of the King or State, Preach the Kingdom of Heaven and the Goſpel, in the ſame Itinerant and Circular manner, through all the Cities and Towns of each Reſpective Kingdom, inſtructing the People in the moſt pure Doctrine and Belief of the Holy Jeſus, and in all the moſt Neceſſary and Fundamental Points of his Religion (a definition of which, 'tis poſſible,* Volente Deo, *may be the Subject of another Diſcourſe) and let their Subjects be levelled againſt Sedition and Rebellion, Exhibit Peace in its beſt Apparel, Extoll Juſtice, Mercy and Charity, and whatever may tend to the Glory of God, or Peace and Well-fare of Man-kind, and not at all to meddle with Law, the State, or Government; always remembring they are not appointed Miniſters of State, but of the Goſpel. And if a diſtinct performance was allotted for ſuch and ſuch a Circuit, it would not do amiſs,* viz. *Inſtructing and Proſelyting for one, Baptizing for another, and giving the Sacrament for a Third, or varying theſe, as may be thought moſt fit and convenient, doubling the firſt, or intermitting the laſt: Or if from the ſaid Colledge, having Twelve Gates, they ſhould go out every Month and Heal the Nations (which Scripture indigitates) nothing can be thought of more convenient.* This way and method, I hope, will eaſily be allowed me to be ſufficient for the Salvation of Souls; and would but the

the Princes and States of Christendom consent to settle such an *œconomy*, the plain Consequences thereof would be, *Popery*, that *wicked thing*, so much hated and abominated by *Protestants*, not only for its own innate Evils, but also its Collateral and Accidental ones; being the common Tool which all Parties use to set up, or pull down one another, would in a moment be buried in Oblivion; and *Heresy*, its Twin and Brother in Iniquity, would be buried in the same Grave. A new Heaven and a new Earth would suddenly appear; all the Disturbing Names of *Papists* and *Protestants*, *Schismatick* and *Heretick*, would speedily cease; we should have no Sides nor Parties of Christians; no bitter Contentions which is the *True Church*; the Indefatigable Pains of compassing Sea and Land to make *Proselytes*, would be at an end, and all the mischievous Consequences attending thereon: Now all Sides and Parties are Industrious to make Converts, and give their Reasons and Arguments, and yet at the same time Interpretatively would not have them taken, for none meets with greater Shame and Ignominy then Converts, who if they obey their own, or are convinced by others Reasons, are said to *change* their Religion (as they call it) and are hated and abhorred; so that men in a great measure, are under an obligation to stick to their Principles, whether they be *good* or *bad*, because of the Reproach they of necessity must meet with if they *change* them. And alas! These which they call their Principles and Religion, are nothing but some fond and unnecessary Opinion, which *may be changed* and no *hurt* at all done. But *then* men would have no Temptation to change, having *no* Party to go to, *no* Sect to maintain, and *no particular Church* to defend; which are the common Themes of Christian men, and at this time make but too great Part of their Religion, and too frequently ministers matter of their Mutual Ruine. Again, Now most of our time is spent in commending our selves and *our*

way, and discommending others, & their way; and Three parts of our Religion, is made up of nothing but Vapour and Smoke, of mere Talk and finding of Faults; if we can *charge* and *accuse*, and make *others* Guilty, and *our selves* Innocent; 'tis *Religion* enough: And amongst so many contending Parties of *Christians*, 'tis almost *impossible* any Justice should be done, the Spirit of *Partiality* so reigneth amongst us: But *Terræ Astræa Revisit*. Then Justice would run down our Streets like a mighty Stream, and all the Parts, the Piety, and Learning, at least wise Honesty, which is certainly amongst most Parties of Christians, would have their due Effects, and appear in their own proper Colours, when cleared from the *Fogs* and *Mists* of *Contentious Disputes*, which confines them to their proper Orbs, and will not suffer them to be Communicative, or disperse their Rayes, but give a dim and partial Light. 'Further, Now no Oath can bind, no Benefits oblige, no Prince Reign, but all the most Sacred Bonds of Gratitude, Honour and Obedience, and every other thing which may make men wish to Live, are violated and broken asunder, if Religion, or that which men call by that Name, stand in Competition, or Mother-Church is to be served; and men pull down Houses, tumble down Monarchs, and ruine Kingdoms for her sake. Sure then those must be happy days, when no particular *Religion* or *Church* is to be set up, nor any to be pull'd down, no Party to be pleased, and none to be offended, but every Nation will be all of one Side, one Party, and the same Religion: And of how great Refreshment and Consolation is it, to think that that hot and fiery Zeal which has burnt so many Martyrs, and consumed so many Pious and Good men, nay, destroyed the Lord of Life himself, shall be absolutely and for ever quenched in the Springs of this most *Charitable* and *Refreshing* Fountain, which from the Heart of each *Respective Kingdom* shall be constantly running, and refreshing the dry and barren Corners

' ners of the ſame; and like ſo many Rivulets of Oyl, ' ſhall paſs through the great Ocean of the World, and ' Heal, and Cleanſe, and Purify, but not mix with the ' ſame: But what ſhould I ſay?

Ultima Cumæi Venit jam carminis ætas,
Magnus ab integro Seclorum naſcitur ordo;
Jam redit & Virgo, redeunt Saturnia Regna.

The Happineſs which this Adminiſtration will moſt certainly bring into the World, cannot be well expreſſed, it will bring back the Golden Age, and preſently put a new Face on all Affairs; it will joyn Juſtice and Mercy, Truth and Peace together, in ſuch an inſeparable Bond, that all the Malice and Subtilty of the Grand Impoſtor (who is now going to his Priſon) ſhall not be able to unlooſe.

' Firſt, The Man of Sin will be pulled down, and we ' ſhall hear no more of the Bloody Machinations of *Rome*, ' the Cruelty of the *Spaniſh* Inquiſition, the Barbarity of ' *French* or *Iriſh* Maſſacres, nor of the Unnaturalneſs of ' *Engliſh* and *Scotch* Rebellions, no Holy Leagues or Solemn ' Leagues and Covenants, or Aſſociations, will be heard of ' amongſt us; but *Chriſtendom* from an *Aceldama*, will be ' made like the Garden of *Eden*, or Paradice of *God*; *and every Nation have its Tree of Life, or Fountain of Living Water in the middle, which by its conſtant Irriguous Streams, will cool all Heats and Animoſities, and bring all in Subjection to the Gentle Laws of the Holy Jeſus:* ' But further, We ' ſhall hear of no Plots or Contrivances, or Black and ' Bloody Charges and Miſrepreſentations, all Noiſe of ' Perſecution or flying for Religion, the Proteſtants from ' *France*, or Papiſts from *England*, will ceaſe; no Here- ' tick to be Burned, or Schiſmatick to be Ruined; and ' the reaſon is, becauſe *all Law*, and *Power*, and *Parties*, ' *Names* of *Diſtinctions*, and all other Cauſes and Curſed

'Motives of Miſchief and Diſtraction will be utterly Abo-
'liſh'd, and caſt into the ſame Dungeon with the great
'Criminal and Deviſer of them. But my Contemplation
'ſtill carries me further, in Congratulation of the Prin-
'ces of *Chriſtendom* on this Alteration; How eaſy muſt be
'their Government, and how happy their Days, when
'the heavy Eccleſiaſtical Yoke is taken from their Shoul-
'ders? When they may be ſerved by *all* their Subjects,
'when they may puniſh *ſingle* Offenders, and not offend
'whole Parties, when there are no Parties to be pleaſed
'or diſpleaſed, and none to be Inflamed againſt the Govern-
'ment by diſcontented States-men? And ſince ſome will
'be Lords, keep the Power to oppreſs, and give no Tolera-
'tion to men of differing Thoughts and Apprehenſions,
'This method will ſet them on a level with their Brethren,
'*and there will be no need that Toleration ſhould be either gi-*
'*ven or taken*; and Then they may reckon their Crowns
'to ſet much ſurer on their Heads, when none have a
'priviledge or pretence to offend on the Score of a *Tender*
'*Conſcience*: But in a more particular manner, as to our
own Nation and preſent Circumſtances, a conſiderable
body of us are for a Church of *England*, a Religion
Eſtabliſhed by a Law, for Biſhops, for Eccleſiaſtical Go-
vernment, Conformity, and a National Church; others
we have who are a no leſs conſiderable body, which we
call *Diſſenters* (though indeed all are Diſſenters one from
another) and theſe would have no Biſhops, no Eccleſia-
ſtical Government, or Lordſhips, or Temporal Dignities
conferred on Spiritual Men, and no Superiority of Func-
ons in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, but would have Paſtors,
and Elders, and Deacons; *and in ſhort*, another differing
way of Adminiſtration. Again, The firſt, which we call
Church-men, and the others which we call *Diſſenters*, are
divided and ſub-divided, and have ſeveral Denominations
and Claſſes, and Diſtinctions amongſt themſelves; one
are for Moderation and Condeſcention; another for
Strict-

ſtrictneſs, and are *Bigotted* to their Law and Eſtabliſhment, *&c.* Some again are for a *National*, ſome for a *Synodical*, and others an *Independant* Church; ſome draw one way, and ſome another, and all would have their own *little* Way and Method prevail, ſo that we are perfectly Diſtracted and Confounded, and can come to no Settlement or Agreement, only we all agree in this, to call our ſelves by one general Name; and that is *not* Chriſtian, but *Proteſtant*. We all proteſt againſt *Popery*, a Name for *another ſort of Chriſtians*, which poſſeſs ſeveral Kingdoms and Nations, which we call our *common Enemies*. Now

Was but theſe *Angeli Evangelizantes*, theſe Goſpel Angels or Miniſters of the Goſpel, inſtituted and appointed in each Nation as afore-ſaid, to go their Stages and Circuits:

Firſt, As I ſaid before, we ſhould have *no Popery*, and by conſequence *no Proteſtants* to Proteſt againſt it; and all our Names of Diſtinction ſo deſtructive to our ſelves, when caſt into ſuch an *Avarage*, would be perfectly loſt; we ſhould have no Contentions for Offices, Dignities, or Superiority, the Lot would give an equal Title and Privilege to all. Hitherto the Miniſters of the Goſpel has been appointed by *Men*, ſo has been corrupted and forced to ſerve the ends of Princes, of ſeveral Parties, and ill-deſigning Politicians, Has been mixt with all our Governments, and clog'd with *Humane Inventions* and *Traditions*; but by *This* Method *God Himſelf* would chooſe his Miniſters; and then from *Humane* and *Earthly*, it would preſently become *Heavenly* and *Divine*; all the Sinifter Arts to get Church Preferment (ſo deſtructive to publick Peace and Truth) would fall to the Ground; the Doctors would ceaſe to Flatter the Court to get Biſhop-Pricks; and Lecturers, their Pariſhoners or Patrons to advance their Stipend; it would be put out of the Power of Ignorant Patrons to prefer Ignorant Novices to the Miniſtry, or Ignorant

rant Parents a weak and unfit Boy for the University; *Nay, it would be put out of the Power of Princes and States themselves to give Preferment, or make Ministers*, and so by consequence (as they have but too much done) *to make what Gospel they please.* And we may reasonably hope, that Truth will then be a Virgin, and appear in her Native Beauty, when Honours, Lordships, and great Revenues, the common Temptations to Deflower and Disguise her, are taken away, and it will not a little contribute to publick Peace, when all *Denials*, the common Parent of *Discontent* are removed; But what may be as great an Inducement as any to move a Complyance hereto by all our Sides and Parties, is, *That whereas they would all have their own ways to be preferred, This Method will make no Party either upper or under, but will pull all in general down, and set none in particular up, so will prevent all Emulation, and give none of them reason to Complain.*

From what hath been said, it may reasonably be expected, that the perplexed Nations of Christendom should hearken to so excellent an Oeconomy, especially the *settleing Patriots* of our own Distracted Nations; and in hearkening to it, they will but hearken to the plain Precept and Advice of their Blessed Lord and great Legislator. For his Words are these, *All Power is given me in Heaven and Earth, go ye therefore and Teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always even to the END of the World.* As if he had said, May be some may question your Power and Authority to Preach my Gospel; or 'tis possible you your selves may think my Commission not sufficient, but expect to receive your Power and Commission from the Princes of the Earth; But I tell you it is *sufficient*, and that I have Received all Power, both in Heaven and Earth; *Go ye therefore and Teach all Nations*, &c. In which Words our Blessed Lord doth seem plainly to Dictate to the whole

World,

World, how he would have his Gospel dispensed; and that in every minute Circumstance, *viz.* First, The manner, they must *go and Teach*, which doth plainly imply an *Itineration*; then *whom*, they must Teach *all Nations*. Secondly, The Duty of these Predicants in the *matter*, what they must do, *Baptize and Teach them to Observe all the Things he has Commanded. And lo I am with you always even to the End of the World.* This plainly implies the *Continuation*, how long he would have this Method continue, *viz.* for ever, to the *End* of the World; and is confirmed by a promise of a Blessing on the due performance thereof. But here let me Note, that the Princes of the Earth, though *Idolatrous* and *Pagan*, had all the right and legal Power *in ordinary*; and that both our Saviour acknowledged, and the Apostles well knew, but not being Proselyted to his Doctrine, would grant no Commissions, or Authorise such Preachers; therefore he himself, as well as they, had Power on Earth (yea all Power in an Extraordinary manner) was fain to use it, and issue out the first Commissions; but the Nature and Intent of these Commissions was not to convey a Power to a sort of men *distinct* from the State, but was an Act of Necessity; and he had not used any Power, or given his Commissions at all, if the High Priest or Jewish Sanhedrim would have done it. The Princes and States of Christendom therefore since sufficiently Proselyted to the Faith of Jesus; may justly issue out their *Quo Warranto's* against all Ecclesiastical Power, and all Persons whatsoever, who claim any Power, Privilege, or Jurisdiction *jure divino*, distinct from theirs, for it peculiarly belongs to them as Nursing Fathers of the Church, to issue out their Commissions, and to say, *Go and Teach*, &c. 'Tis true, if they send none, or send those that are contrary to Christs Institutions, which instead of giving the Children Bread, will give them Stones; then the Power Lapses, and returns to its Fountain, and Men must Act by Vertue of Christs

Ex-

Extraordinary Commission, and have recourse to his special Power, for Christ must be Preached. *Princes* ought to have the Preference; but if they neglect their *Duty*, Renounce their *Power*, or are so far from commanding it, that they forbid it; Then *God must be Obeyed, rather than Man*; as has been the Plea (and a just one too) of all hitherto that have entered on the Function. But further, I desire to take notice of one thing more, and that is of the last Clause of our Saviour's Precept, *viz. And lo I am with you always, even to the end of the World.* Christ said, *his* Words were Spirit and Life; but some there are who too much incline to the Letter, and like the old *Jews*, think the Kingdom of Heaven should come with Observation. They expect a *new* Material Heaven and a new Earth; and that Christ will come again on Earth personally, and Reign a *Thousand Years* in great Glory: These are but Fancies, for the Text seems to be plain, And *lo I am with you always, even to the End of the World.* First, this plainly implies, the World shall have an end, and then his Willingness, that this way of Administration should continue *so long*; and he mentions not the least word of his coming again in the Interim, or that the world shall have *Two Ends*; which now leaving the world we may reasonably suppose he would have made some mention of, if such things should have come to pass. It seems plainly to me therefore, that there will be no New *Material* Heaven or Earth, or that Christ will come Personally again to Reign amongst Men, and my Reason is, his own Words, *Lo I am with you always, even to the End of the World*; not *I will be*, but *I am* with you; and what he promised them, was not a *Personal*, but a *Ministerial Presence*: A Presence by his Spirit; as if he had said, If you will go and continue to Preach my Gospel amongst all Nations, I promise to Aid you in your Administration, and Assist you by the Influence of my Spirit, and that not for a *little* Time, but to the

end

end of the World; which Promiſe he performed, and and that in a ſpecial Manner; ſo long as they continued to obſerve his Words and Inſtitution. But when Men began to make *Merchandize* of his Goſpel, to Monopolize and to Cloſet up the Sun-Beams, and to put their Candle under a Buſhel; no wonder they fell into ſuch Darkneſs and Confuſion, and no wonder he withdrew himſelf and the preſence of his Spirit from them. If therefore we expect his coming again, or his more *particular Preſence* in the large Effuſions of his Spirit, We muſt ſend forth his Light and his Truth, and ceaſe to Sell and parcel out his Goſpel: we muſt draw it out of the Garriſons in which particular Parties have impriſoned it, and ſet it on a *Candleſtick*, on a Mountain, that it may be as free as the *Air* or the *Sun-beams*: It has been long *Enſlaved* and *Enthrall'd*; and if we a little view the preſent State of *Chriſtendom*, and conſider what *Canons*, *Conſtitutions* and *Decretals*, what differing *Cuſtoms*, *Educations* and *Prejudices* there are, how many differing *Opinions*, and differing *Intereſts*; the multitude of *Ceremonies* and *Traditions*, the various Forms of *Worſhip*, and *Scenes* of *Government*; and how fond every Nation and Party; nay, every individual Man, is of his own Way: It will ſeem a very difficult Thing, to Extricate and free it from ſo great a *Bondage*; but the greater the *Work*, the more worthy the *Author*, and more *Glory* to God. *Pharoah* kept the *Iſraelites* long in *Bondage*, and was loth to let them go, reaping great *Advantages* by them, as ſome do by the Goſpel: But when *the God of Heaven* called for, and demanded them, he was forced to reſtore him his *Heritage* and his *Choſen*. Chriſt is now *calling* for his Goſpel and his Saints; and God for *his Jews*, his antient *People* and *Inheritance*; and *They* will ſhake the *Heavens* and *Earth*, but they will have them. *For by Fire and by Sword will they plead with all Fleſh*,

and the Sloth of the Lord shall be many. The *God of Heaven* has already begun to shake the *Nations*, and is about to fulfil all his *Promises* made to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by the Mouth of all his *Prophets*. *Behold*, saith he, *Isa. 66* and the 12. *I will extend Peace to her like a River, and the Glory of the Gentiles like a flowing Stream.* Now what can be like to a flowing Stream, than these *Angeli Evangelizantes*? These *Gospel-Angels*, which by a constant Flux and Reflux from the Heart of each Nation, *will fill the Earth full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*; *No dry or barren Corners shall escape watering from these Fountains, and no dark Recesses the Rays of their Light.* But Poor *Hominello*, I fall under the Weight, being not able to describe the *Advantages* of this *Oeconomie*; I must again call the *Prophet* to my Assistance in that Pathetick Description of this *Temple of Peace*, this new *Jerusalem*, *cap. 65. ver. 17. For behold, I create a New Heavens, and a New Earth; and the former shall not be remembred, or come into mind*; *But be you glad and rejoyce for ever in that which I Create: For behold, I create Jerusalem a Rejoycing, and her People a Joy; And I will rejoyce in Jerusalem, and Joy in my People; and the Voice of Weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the Voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an Infant of Days, nor an old Man that hath not filled his Days: For the Child shall die an hundred Years old, but the Sinner being an hundred Years old, shall be Accursed. And they shall build Houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant Vineyards, and eat the Fruit of them. They shall not Build, and another Inhabit; they shall not Plant, and another Eat. For as the days of a Tree are the days of my People, and mine Elect shall long enjoy the Work of their Hands: They shall not labour in Vain, nor bring forth for Trouble: For they are the Seed of the Blessed of the Lord, and their Offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before*

they

they call, I will answer; and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear. The Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together, and the Lion shall eat Straw like the Bullock; and Dust shall be the Serpent's Meat. They shall not hurt, or destroy in all my Holy Mountain, saith the Lord. It shall come to pass *so* and *so*, say the Prophets; but as yet such things have *not* come to pass: But this Administration of the Religion of the *Holy Jesus*, not my *own*, but founded on Holy Writ, will bring such things to pass. It will by its sweet and gentle Influences, soften and mollifie the Ruggedness of the World, appease the Heavens, and transform the Earth, and render it a Paradise, it will set Justice, Truth and Peace, on an unmoveable Foundation; and turn the *World* in a manner into a *Theocracy*. For 'tis more than probable, that by degrees it will vacate and supersede all *humane Sanctions*, and make them of little Effect, by its prevailing Energy and pacifick Nature; making *Love*, and *Charity*, and *Christian Condescension*, the Principal Rulers of the *Universe*. Then will the God of *Love*, of *Truth*, and *Peace*, visit us, and make his abode with us, and rain down his Blessing and Graces upon us, as at the Beginning; and we shall become a *Royal Priesthood*, a *Peculiar People*, zealous (not of destroying one another, *as at this Day*) but zealous of good *Works*. *Ephraim* shall no more vex *Judah*, nor *Judah Ephraim* Every Prince and Nation shall be content with their own Territory and Borders: The noise of *War* shall no more be heard of amongst us, our Swords shall be turned into *Plow Shares*, and our Spears into *Pruning Hooks*. *Zech.* 2 vers. 10. *Sing and Rejoyce, O Daughter of* Sion, *for lo I come and will dwell in the* midst *of thee, saith the Lord; And many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day, and shall be my People; and I will dwell in the* midst *of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee; and the Lord shall inherit* Judah, *his Portion in the Holy Land, and chooſe* Jeruſalem *again.* Be ſilent O all

Fleſh

Fleſh before the Lord, for he is raiſed up out of his Holy Habitation. *And it ſhall be in that day, that* Living Waters *ſhall go out from* Jeruſalem; *half of them,* (viz. Preachers) *towards the former Sea, and half of them towards the hinder Sea; in Summer and in Winter ſhall it be. And the Lord ſhall be King over all the Earth; In that day ſhall there be* One *Lord, and his Name* One: *The* Jews *and the* Gentiles *ſhall uſe the ſame Method and Way of Adminiſtration, and ſend out their Preachers from the* midſt *of their Habitations.* But the Queſtion will be asked, how all the preſent Difficulties will be ſurmounted? In Anſwer to which, let the ſame Prophet ſpeak, *Who art thou, O great Mountain? Before* Zerubbabel (Chriſt) *Thou ſhalt become a Plain; and he ſhall bring forth the* Head Stone *thereof with ſhouting, crying,* Grace, Grace. *The Hands of* Zerubbabel *have laid the Foundation of this Houſe, his Hands ſhall alſo finiſh it. And thou ſhalt know, that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto you.* Chriſt is *Alpha* and *Omega,* the firſt and the laſt, the Conſideration of which, brings me to my Concluſion; in which I ſhall vindicate my ſelf from the Charge of Innovation, and ſay,

'The way which I propoſe, is not a new Way, but the '*Renovation* of an old One: For 'tis the way by which 'Chriſtianity *Entred* the World; and therefore the moſt 'likely to *preſerve* it; 'tis the way which the *Apoſtles* 'uſed, which our *Saviour* practiſed; he went up and 'down doing Good, he ſent out the *Twelve,* and the ſe'venty *Diſciples*; who Preached his Goſpel through the '*Towns* and *Villages*, and then returned to him again. 'When he was leaving the Earth, by a plain Indigitation, 'he Recommended this way. 'Tis a way pregnant with 'all the Felicities can be imagined; 'tis advantageous to 'all Governments, and friendly to all Societies; 'twill 'bring *Glory* to God on High, reſtore *Peace* on Earth, and '*good Will* amongſt Men.

How

How Beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that publiſheth Peace, that bringeth good Tidings of good, that publiſheth Salvation, that ſaith unto Zion, *Thy God Reigneth!* Iſa. 52. Verſe 7.

Hæc cùm fiunt, & Statu hoc, Harmonium & Pacem adferente, inter Gentiles in Terris Chriſtianis poſito, mirabuntur Judæi, Chriſtoque Authori Auſpicatiſſimo tum demùm credent. Nec non, pacato Deo, vocante, Chriſtiano adjuvante, magno cùm gaudio & Triumpho, poſt tam longum ob malitiam & incredulitatem exulatum, ad ſuas Terras Hieroſolymitanas, ex omnibus plagis & Terrarum Regionibus redibunt: Nec futilia aut inania Antiquorum Prophetarum Vaticinia de falici Judæorum *aut Gentilium Statu, diutiùs habebuntur. Nam omnia iſta Grandiloquia, de* Pace, Juſtitiâ, & Veritate, *plenam Solutionem hoc Miniſterio Theocratico habebunt; & exiguo Temporis Spatio, Diverſas Mundi Regiones, quaſi diverſas unius gentis Civitates, mutuo fœdere irrefragabilis amicitiæ conjunctas, Spectabimus. Et Preces illa tum frequens in ore Sacerdotum,* viz. Revoca ad Sedes antiquam Gentem Judæorum, & gloriam Gentilium redde completam, habebit reſponſum.

FINIS.